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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/091,108	03/05/2002	Scott Lee Wellington	TH-1759X (US)	5886
23632	7590	04/14/2006	EXAMINER	
SHELL OIL COMPANY			LEUNG, JENNIFER A	
P O BOX 2463			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
HOUSTON, TX 772522463			1764	

DATE MAILED: 04/14/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Advisory Action Before the Filing of an Appeal Brief	Application No. 10/091,108	Applicant(s) WELLINGTON ET AL.	
	Examiner Jennifer A. Leung	Art Unit 1764	

--The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

THE REPLY FILED 30 March 2006 FAILS TO PLACE THIS APPLICATION IN CONDITION FOR ALLOWANCE.

1. ☒ The reply was filed after a final rejection, but prior to or on the same day as filing a Notice of Appeal. To avoid abandonment of this application, applicant must timely file one of the following replies: (1) an amendment, affidavit, or other evidence, which places the application in condition for allowance; (2) a Notice of Appeal (with appeal fee) in compliance with 37 CFR 41.31; or (3) a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.114. The reply must be filed within one of the following time periods:

- a) ☒ The period for reply expires 3 months from the mailing date of the final rejection.
 b) ☐ The period for reply expires on: (1) the mailing date of this Advisory Action, or (2) the date set forth in the final rejection, whichever is later. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of the final rejection.

Examiner Note: If box 1 is checked, check either box (a) or (b). ONLY CHECK BOX (b) WHEN THE FIRST REPLY WAS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE FINAL REJECTION. See MPEP 706.07(f).

Extensions of time may be obtained under 37 CFR 1.136(a). The date on which the petition under 37 CFR 1.136(a) and the appropriate extension fee have been filed is the date for purposes of determining the period of extension and the corresponding amount of the fee. The appropriate extension fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is calculated from: (1) the expiration date of the shortened statutory period for reply originally set in the final Office action; or (2) as set forth in (b) above, if checked. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of the final rejection, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

NOTICE OF APPEAL

2. ☐ The Notice of Appeal was filed on _____. A brief in compliance with 37 CFR 41.37 must be filed within two months of the date of filing the Notice of Appeal (37 CFR 41.37(a)), or any extension thereof (37 CFR 41.37(e)), to avoid dismissal of the appeal. Since a Notice of Appeal has been filed, any reply must be filed within the time period set forth in 37 CFR 41.37(a).

AMENDMENTS

3. ☐ The proposed amendment(s) filed after a final rejection, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because
 (a) ☐ They raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search (see NOTE below);
 (b) ☐ They raise the issue of new matter (see NOTE below);
 (c) ☐ They are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal; and/or
 (d) ☐ They present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.

NOTE: _____. (See 37 CFR 1.116 and 41.33(a)).

4. ☒ The amendments are not in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121. See attached Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment (PTOL-324).
 5. ☐ Applicant's reply has overcome the following rejection(s): _____.
 6. ☐ Newly proposed or amended claim(s) _____ would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claim(s).
 7. ☒ For purposes of appeal, the proposed amendment(s): a) ☒ will not be entered, or b) ☐ will be entered and an explanation of how the new or amended claims would be rejected is provided below or appended.
 The status of the claim(s) is (or will be) as follows:
 Claim(s) allowed: _____.
 Claim(s) objected to: _____.
 Claim(s) rejected: 1,2,4-8,10-35 and 40-45.
 Claim(s) withdrawn from consideration: _____.

AFFIDAVIT OR OTHER EVIDENCE

8. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence filed after a final action, but before or on the date of filing a Notice of Appeal will not be entered because applicant failed to provide a showing of good and sufficient reasons why the affidavit or other evidence is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 1.116(e).
 9. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence filed after the date of filing a Notice of Appeal, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because the affidavit or other evidence failed to overcome all rejections under appeal and/or appellant fails to provide a showing of a good and sufficient reasons why it is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 41.33(d)(1).
 10. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence is entered. An explanation of the status of the claims after entry is below or attached.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION/OTHER

11. ☒ The request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because:
See Continuation Sheet.
 12. ☐ Note the attached Information Disclosure Statement(s). (PTO/SB/08 or PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____.
 13. ☐ Other: _____.

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Continuation of Item 11.

The request for reconsideration has been considered, but it does NOT place the application in condition for allowance for the same reasons set forth in the Final Office Action.

On page 9 (last paragraph) of the response, Applicants argue,

“There is no suggestion to combine the teachings of Mikus et al. with the teachings of Minet et al. Mikus et al. teaches a flameless combustion heating system that heats the feed to a steam reformer to very high temperatures to provide for the desired products. Minet et al., on the other hand teaches a reactor that can be employed to carry out a low temperature steam reforming reaction that results in the desired products. It would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine an invention directed to maximizing the temperature of the process fluid with an invention directed to carrying out a process at lower temperatures.”

The Examiner respectfully disagrees. In response to Applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the Examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the motivation arises from the teaching that “flameless distributed combustion” provides a controllable heat flux into a process chamber from a heat source that has a uniform temperature and a very low creation of NO_x (see Mikus et al; page 5, lines 1-7). Although the particular examples in Mikus et al. use a relatively high steam reforming reaction temperature in comparison to the lower steam reforming reaction temperature

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in the apparatus of Minet et al., it is noted that the apparatus of Mikus et al. is *inherently capable* of operating at the lower steam reforming temperatures disclosed by Minet et al. In particular, Mikus et al. presents an example where the flameless combustor is used for heating a process of dehydrogenation. The dehydrogenation reaction is conducted at a temperature within the range of 550 °C and 680 °C (see page 16). This temperature range clearly lies within the lower steam reforming temperature range disclosed by Minet et al. (i.e., a temperature in the range of 300 °C to 700 °C; column 4, lines 43-51).

A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In this case, the apparatus of Mikus et al. is capable of performing the intended use of heating a process chamber to a temperature within the lower temperature range disclosed by Minet et al. Also, one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have known to select an appropriate operating temperature for the “flameless distributed combustor” in the modified apparatus of Minet et al., on the basis of suitability for the intended use, because where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art, *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

On page 10 (second paragraph) of the response, Applicants further argue,


“Even if the prior art were combined as proposed, the resultant combination would still fall short of yielding the claimed invention. Minet et al. teaches the use of a reactor that employs a tubular membrane enclosed within a heated metallic tube. Minet et al. teaches that the heat is provided by the combustion of fuel gas in the enclosing furnace and Fig. 2


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depicts an embodiment comprising several banks of reactor sin a furnace. Mikus et al. does not teach the use of two concentric tubes with a plurality of fuel tubes. The embodiments, depicted in Fig. 3 and 9, show a plurality of fuel tubes, but not in combination with one process chamber that is concentric with one oxidation chamber as claimed in the present invention.”

The Examiner respectfully disagrees and maintains her rejection. The test for obviousness is not whether the features of a secondary reference may be bodily incorporated into the structure of the primary reference; nor is it that the claimed invention must be expressly suggested in any one or all of the references. Rather, the test is what the combined teachings of the references would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981). The secondary reference to Mikus et al. was merely presented to teach the “flameless distributed combustion” feature of the claim. The apparatus of Mikus et al. was not meant to be “bodily incorporated” into the steam reforming apparatus disclosed by the primary reference to Minet et al.

The same comments apply with respect to Applicant’s arguments for dependent claims 16, 18, 22-28, 31-35 and 44.

Jennifer A. Leung
April 10, 2006 


ALEXA DOROSHENK NECKEL
PRIMARY EXAMINER

**Notice of Non-Compliant
Amendment (37 CFR 1.121)**

Application No.

10/091,108

Examiner

Jennifer A. Leung

Applicant(s)

WELLINGTON ET AL.

Art Unit

1764

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The amendment document filed on 30 March 2006 is considered non-compliant because it has failed to meet the requirements of 37 CFR 1.121 or 1.4. In order for the amendment document to be compliant, correction of the following item(s) is required.

THE FOLLOWING MARKED (X) ITEM(S) CAUSE THE AMENDMENT DOCUMENT TO BE NON-COMPLIANT:

- ☐ 1. Amendments to the specification:
- ☐ A. Amended paragraph(s) do not include markings.
 - ☐ B. New paragraph(s) should not be underlined.
 - ☐ C. Other _____.
- ☐ 2. Abstract:
- ☐ A. Not presented on a separate sheet. 37 CFR 1.72.
 - ☐ B. Other _____.
- ☐ 3. Amendments to the drawings:
- ☐ A. The drawings are not properly identified in the top margin as "Replacement Sheet," "New Sheet," or "Annotated Sheet" as required by 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 - ☐ B. The practice of submitting proposed drawing correction has been eliminated. Replacement drawings showing amended figures, without markings, in compliance with 37 CFR 1.84 are required.
 - ☐ C. Other _____.
- ☒ 4. Amendments to the claims:
- ☐ A. A complete listing of all of the claims is not present.
 - ☐ B. The listing of claims does not include the text of all pending claims (including withdrawn claims)
 - ☒ C. Each claim has not been provided with the proper status identifier, and as such, the individual status of each claim cannot be identified. Note: the status of every claim must be indicated after its claim number by using one of the following status identifiers: (Original), (Currently amended), (Canceled), (Previously presented), (New), (Not entered), (Withdrawn) and (Withdrawn-currently amended).
 - ☐ D. The claims of this amendment paper have not been presented in ascending numerical order.
 - ☒ E. Other: Claim 4 should be designated as (Currently amended).
- ☐ 5. Other (e.g., the amendment is unsigned or not signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.4):

For further explanation of the amendment format required by 37 CFR 1.121, see MPEP § 714.

TIME PERIODS FOR FILING A REPLY TO THIS NOTICE:

1. Applicant is given **no new time period** if the non-compliant amendment is an after-final amendment or an amendment filed after allowance. If applicant wishes to resubmit the non-compliant after-final amendment with corrections, the **entire corrected amendment** must be resubmitted.
2. Applicant is given **one month**, or thirty (30) days, whichever is longer, from the mail date of this notice to supply the correction, if the non-compliant amendment is one of the following: a preliminary amendment, a non-final amendment (including a submission for a request for continued examination (RCE) under 37 CFR 1.114), a supplemental amendment filed within a suspension period under 37 CFR 1.103(a) or (c), and an amendment filed in response to a *Quayle* action. If any of above boxes 1. to 4. are checked, the correction required is only the **corrected section** of the non-compliant amendment in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121.

Extensions of time are available under 37 CFR 1.136(a) only if the non-compliant amendment is a non-final amendment or an amendment filed in response to a *Quayle* action.

Failure to timely respond to this notice will result in:

Abandonment of the application if the non-compliant amendment is a non-final amendment or an amendment filed in response to a *Quayle* action; or

Non-entry of the amendment if the non-compliant amendment is a preliminary amendment or supplemental amendment.

Legal Instruments Examiner (LIE), if applicable

Telephone No.